

## SpaceX Test Fire - Paving the Way...

Written by Mark Bontrager

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As SpaceX moves closer to the inaugural Falcon 9 launch from the Cape, it is a superb indicator of a commercial space future loaded with opportunities for Florida. SpaceX's successful test firing of the Falcon 9 engines a few weeks ago was a critical milestone and demonstrates that Florida is at a point where we need to prove out commercial capabilities – and this is certainly a positive step toward that goal.

In Space Florida's Spaceport Master Plan, there are several projects proposed that specifically benefit commercial space interests in Florida. As part of that plan, we are promoting the following investments through the Florida Department of Transportation's Five Year Work Program:

1. Four projects for Space X at Cape Canaveral, including storage, processing and refurbishment facilities for both the Falcon 9 launch vehicle and the Dragon Capsule
2. A Vertical Integration Facility (VIF) for United Launch Alliance (ULA) at Space Launch Complex 41
3. Three projects through the Jacksonville Aviation Authority at Cecil Field Spaceport pertaining to Reusable Launch Vehicle (RLV) facilities

As the State entity charged with attracting and expanding new aerospace businesses in Florida, we will continue to advocate aggressively for commercial growth.

In addition to achieving milestones like the Falcon 9 engine firing, Space X has played a vital role in the acceptance and growth of commercial space interests with the great support of the 45<sup>th</sup> Space Wing and NASA Kennedy Space Center. I am thankful to the Air Force and NASA leadership – and to companies like Space X and others – who continue to press forward to

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success and ensure Florida remains competitive in the changing global space marketplace.